

Explanation of The Book of Tawheed

Class Notes – Chapter 28

بَابُ مَا جَاءَ فِي التَّطَيُّرِ

What has been mentioned regarding belief in omens (al-Tatayyur)

- **Relevance of the chapter to the book:** Since believing in omens is a form of *shirk* which violates the principle of pure *tawheed* or at least impairs its perfection, the author dedicated a chapter to warn against such an evil practice.
- (التَّطَيُّرُ) - "Belief in omens". It is to believe that there is an omen in something seen, heard or known, which determines a person's decision to proceed with a matter or refrain from it.
- The pagan Arabs of the *jaahiliyya* would predominantly use birds as omens to determine their affairs, which is why the name carries that meaning (a *tayr* is a bird). This does not mean that omens are restricted to birds alone, but can also extend to other entities such as places, times, people etc. The Arabs would also consider such things as omens which bring about either good or bad luck.
- *al-Tatayyur* is considered as minor *shirk* because it impairs the perfection of *tawheed* from two perspectives.
 1. It demonstrates a weakness in true *tawakul* (reliance) on Allah. Since *tawakul* is an act of worship, directing it to other than Allah is a form of *shirk*.
 2. That it constitutes legislating a cause which Allah did not legislate as a legitimate cause. Considering these omens as causes (*asbaab*) for determining affairs is not something Allah has legislated.
- If, however, a person believes that these omens bring about good or cause harm within themselves and are not simply causes, then they have fallen into major *shirk*. This is because they believe that there is other than Allah who can create and control the affairs.

﴿ وَقَوْلِ اللَّهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿ أَلَا إِنَّمَا ظَايِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ وَلَكِنَّ أَكْثَرَهُمْ لَا يَعْلَمُونَ ﴾

Allah the Almighty said: Indeed, their misfortune is decreed by Allah, but most of them do not know. [al-A'raaf: 131]

- This *ayah* was revealed regarding the people of Musa, as Allah mentions in Surat al A'raf:

﴿ وَإِنْ تُصِيبَهُمْ سَيِّئَةٌ يَطَّيَّرُوا بِمُوسَى وَمَنْ مَعَهُ أَلَا إِنَّمَا ظَايِرُهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ ﴾

And if a bad [condition] struck them, they saw an evil omen in Musa and those with him.

Unquestionably, their fortune is with Allah. [al-A'raaf: 131]

When the people of Musa were tested with drought and famine, they would see an evil omen in Musa and his followers and blame these hardships on them.

- {ظَانُّهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ} – “Their fortune is with Allah”. That is, what they have been afflicted with from drought and famine is from what Allah has decreed upon them as a consequence of their disbelief and rejection of their Messenger.
- {لَا يَعْلَمُونَ} – “They do not know”. That is, they are ignorant that Allah is the One who decrees all things, and that what befalls them from affliction is from Allah and not from Musa. Allah refuted that *Musa* was a bad omen who brought bad luck with him. Because of their blindness and ignorance, they failed to recognise that the Messengers of Allah only come with that which is good and full of *barakah!*
- **General meaning of the ayah:** When afflicted with drought and famine, the people of Musa accused him and his people of being evil omens. However, Allah refutes them and confirms that whatever evil comes to them is by His Will and Command as a punishment for their disbelief.

Allah also depicts them as ignorant and devoid of any contemplation. Had they pondered over what afflicted them, they would have known that Musa brought nothing but goodness, success and blessings for those who believed in him and followed his message.

- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That Allah refutes the deviant ideology of the polytheists and pagans whereby they believed in omens. These perceived omens have no influence on the decree of Allah. Since they are not a legitimate cause, they constitute *shirk*.

وَقَوْلِهِ تَعَالَى: ﴿قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ أَإِن ذُكِّرْتُمْ بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ﴾

And He the Almighty said: They [Messengers] said: Your fate is with yourselves. Is it because you are admonished? Rather, you are a people who transgress all bounds. [Yasin: 19]

- This *ayah* was revealed regarding the People of the Town as mentioned in Surat Yasin. When their messengers came to them, they saw them as an evil omen and threatened to punish them.

﴿قَالُوا إِنَّا تَطَيَّرْنَا بِكُمْ لَئِن لَّمْ تَنْتَهُوا لَنَرْجُمَنَّكُمْ وَلَيَمَسَّنَّكُم مِّنَّا عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ﴾

They said: ‘Indeed, we consider you a bad omen. If you do not desist, we will surely stone you, and there will surely touch you, from us, a painful punishment’. [Yasin: 18]

- {قَالُوا طَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ} – “Your fate is with yourselves”. As a result of your rejection of the Messengers and threatening them with punishment if they do not desist.
- There is no contradiction between this *ayah* and the *ayah* in Surat al-A’raaf mentioned previously.
 - {ظَانُّهُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ} – “Their fortune is with Allah”. That is, Allah has decreed it because of their disbelief.
 - {ظَائِرُكُمْ مَعَكُمْ} – “Your fate is with yourselves”. That is, they are the cause which necessitated the fate that Allah decreed upon them. Their disbelief necessitated that Allah punish them.
- {أَأِن ذُكِّرْتُمْ} – “Is it because you were reminded?”. Do you consider us a bad omen only because we remind you of the truth?! When the disbelievers from the People of the Town were exhorted and reminded, they accused the Messengers of being evil omens.
- {بَلْ أَنْتُمْ قَوْمٌ مُّسْرِفُونَ} – “Rather you are a transgressing people”. Transgression is to exceed and violate the limits when opposing the truth. Because of their transgression, the People of the Town were afflicted with punishment from Allah.
- **General meaning of the ayah:** Allah refutes the false ideologies of those who renounce His Messengers and accuse them of being the source of calamities. Allah affirms that the cause of these calamities is disbelief and evil deeds.

It would have been better for the disbelievers to respond to the admonitions of their Messengers in order to avoid such calamities. However, because of their transgression, Allah struck them with these calamities.

- **Relevance of the ayah to the chapter:** That Allah refutes the deviant ideology of the disbelievers whereby they consider the Messengers of Allah as bad omens. What befalls them of calamities is from the decree of Allah as a consequence of their disbelief.

وَعَنْ أَبِي هُرَيْرَةَ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ ﷺ قَالَ: لَا عَدْوَى، وَلَا طَيْرَةَ، وَلَا هَامَةَ، وَلَا صَفَرَ. أَخْرَجَاهُ. وَزَادَ مُسْلِمٌ: وَلَا نَوْءَ، وَلَا غُولَ.

Abu Hurairah narrated that Allah's Messenger ﷺ said: There is no 'Adwa (contagion), and no Tiyarah (bad omens), and no Hamah (owl), and no Safar. [Bukhari and Muslim]
Muslim added: And no Naw' (constellation) and no Ghul (ghoul).

- (لَا عَدْوَى) – “There is no contagion”. That is, no contagious disease is transmitted to another person without Allah’s permission. This does not negate the existence of contagion, but negates that it can occur without the permission of Allah. The pagan Arabs believed that the contagious disease would transmit to others by itself. The Prophet ﷺ negated this false belief and attributed the contagion to Allah’s will and decree.
- (وَلَا طَيْرَةَ) – “And no bad omens”. Whether they are in birds, names, locations or persons. The word (لَا) can either represent a negation (*nafy*) or a prohibition (*nahy*), however, the negation is more eloquent and includes both meanings. That is, the effects of evil omens are negated and considered as delusion, therefore belief in them is prohibited.
- (وَلَا هَامَةَ) – “And no bad omens in owls”. This is a specific type of bad omen. The pagan Arabs would consider the night owl as a bad omen. The *hadith* came to invalidate this belief.
- (وَلَا صَفَرَ) – “And no Safar”. Some scholars maintain that it refers to a specific parasite that infects the stomach and intestines of humans and cattle. According to this opinion, it would be a specific type of ‘*adwaa* (contagion) which can only transmit to others with the permission of Allah.
 Other scholars are of the view that it refers to the month of Safar. The pagan Arabs believed that the arrival of the month of *Safar* boded evil. According to this opinion it would be a specific type of *tiyara* (bad omen).
- (وَزَادَ مُسْلِمٌ) – “Muslim added”. In the narration of Muslim the Prophet ﷺ added two additional prohibitions.
- (وَلَا نَوْءَ) – “And no constellations”. The pagan Arabs believed that the position of the stars exclusively affected the climate without divine intervention from Allah. The *hadith* clearly invalidates this false belief.
- (وَلَا غُولَ) – “And no ghouls”. It refers to the evil spirits or demons. The pagan Arabs claimed that such spirits could mislead them from their ways and even kill them. The *hadith* clearly invalidates this false belief.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ invalidated the false beliefs of the pagan Arabs, whereby they took birds, months, stars, demons and evil spirits as bad omens which brought about misfortune and calamity.

They also believed that diseases could infect people without divine intervention from Allah. The Prophet ﷺ warded off such superstitions and called people to remain steadfast on pure *tawheed* by exclusively relying on Allah.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The Prophet ﷺ invalidated seeking evil omens and negated their effect. This invalidation clearly demonstrates its falsity and its inability to have any effect on any matters.

وَلَهُمَا عَنْ أَنَسٍ رَضِيَ اللَّهُ عَنْهُ قَالَ: قَالَ رَسُولُ اللَّهِ ﷺ: لَا عَدْوَى، وَلَا طَيْرَةَ، وَيُعْجِبُنِي الْفَأْلُ. قَالُوا: وَمَا الْفَأْلُ؟ قَالَ: الْكَلِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ.

Anas reported that the Prophet ﷺ said: There is no 'Adwa (contagion) and no Tiyarah (bad omens) but al-Fa'l pleases me. They asked: What is al-Fa'l? He ﷺ answered: It is a good word. [Bukhari and Muslim]

- (لَا عَدْوَى وَلَا طَيْرَةَ) – “There is no contagion and no evil omens”. The explanation of these has preceded in the *hadith* of Abu Huraira.
- (الْكَلِمَةُ الطَّيِّبَةُ) – “A good word”. It pleases the Prophet ﷺ because it is a cause for happiness, optimism and cheerfulness. For example, saying ‘O You who is healthy’ (يا سالم) in the presence of someone who is sick, to give them optimism that they will be cured with the permission of Allah.
- The differences between *al-fa'l* and *al-tiyara* can be outlined as follows:
 1. *al-fa'l* is always agreeable and pleasing in nature, whereas *al-tiyara* is always disagreeable and displeasing in nature.
 2. *al-fa'l* entails putting trust in Allah and having good thoughts of Him. A believer is commanded to trust Allah and have good thought of Him. *al-Tiyara* indicates mistrust in Allah and having evil thoughts of Him. A believer is forbidden from mistrusting Allah and having evil thoughts of Him.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** The Prophet ﷺ invalidates the false belief of the pagan Arabs whereby they believed that diseases could infect people without the permission of Allah, and that certain things represented evil omens which brought about misfortune and bad luck.

The Prophet ﷺ excluded optimistic and encouraging words as being the same as evil omens, by stating that he liked them and was pleased with them. This is because they have a positive effect on people.

- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The Prophet ﷺ makes clear that *al-fa'l* (a positive word) is not from the forbidden *tiyara*.

وَلِأَبِي دَاوُدَ بِسَنَدٍ صَحِيحٍ عَنْ عُقْبَةَ بْنِ عَامِرٍ قَالَ: ذُكِرَتِ الطَّيْرَةُ عِنْدَ رَسُولِ اللَّهِ ﷺ فَقَالَ: أَحْسَنُهَا الْفَأْلُ وَلَا تَرُدُّ مُسْلِمًا، فَإِذَا رَأَى أَحَدَكُمْ مَا يَكْرَهُ فَلْيَقُلْ: اللَّهُمَّ لَا يَأْتِي بِالْحَسَنَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا يَدْفَعُ السَّيِّئَاتِ إِلَّا أَنْتَ وَلَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِكَ.

Uqbah bin Aamir narrates: al-Tiyarah (bad omens) was once mentioned before Allah's Messenger ﷺ and he said: The best form of it is al-Fa'l (optimism). It does not prevent a Muslim from his objective. Whenever any of you sees something he dislikes he should say: 'O Allah, none but You brings good things! None but you prevents evil things! There is no power and no strength except in You.' [Abu Dawud with an authentic chain of narration]

- **Takhreej:** The correct narrator of the *hadith* is 'Urwa ibn 'Aaamir (not Uqbah ibn 'Aaamir) as narrated by Abu Dawud in his Sunan. There is a difference of opinion as to whether 'Urwa ibn 'Aaamir was a *sahabi* or not. Those who considered him as a *sahabi* graded the *hadith* as authentic (*sahih*), while those who considered him as a *tabi'e* graded the *hadith* as *mursal*, which is one of the types of weak (*da'eef*) *hadith*. And Allah knows best.

- (بِسْنَدٍ صَحِيحٍ) – “With an authentic chain of narration”. It would appear that the author is of the opinion that this *hadith* is *sahih*.
- (أَحْسَنُهَا الْقَوْلُ) – “The best form of it is *al-Fa’l*”. It has preceded that *al-Fa’l* is not from the forbidden *tiyara*. Therefore, this statement is interpreted as meaning *al-fa’l* resembles *al-tiyarah* in a particular way, which is the decision to proceed with a matter.
 - *al-Fa’l* causes a person to proceed with a matter based on encouragement, while being optimistic and having *tawakul* in Allah.
 - *al-Tiyara* causes a person to proceed with a matter while relying on illegitimate *asbaab* and having no, or weak, *tawakul* in Allah.
- (وَلَا تَرُدُّ مُسْلِمًا) – “It does not prevent a Muslim from his objective”. Whereas the disbeliever and those with weak *tawakul* may be discouraged from what they intend to do due to their belief in evil omens.
- (فَإِذَا رَأَى أَحَدُكُمْ مَا يَكْرَهُ) – “Whenever any of you sees something he dislikes”. The insinuations of bad omens may enter their heart, in which case they can recite the mentioned *du’aa* as a form of protection.
- **General meaning of the *hadith*:** The narrator of the *hadith* relates that omens were mentioned before the Prophet ﷺ so that he would explain their ruling. The Prophet ﷺ declared the invalidity of believing in them and further explained that *al-fa’l* (positive words) are permissible and not considered as evil omens.

The Prophet ﷺ explained that omens should not discourage a Muslim from fulfilling their objective, because a true believer firmly believes that no harm or benefit may affect them without Allah’s permission. On the other hand, such evil omens may deter a disbeliever from accomplishing their objectives.

The Prophet ﷺ also guided his ummah to the *du’aa* they should recite if these insinuations of evil omens ever enter their hearts. The *du’aa* implies a Muslim’s attachment to Allah, for only He can bring about good and only He can eliminate evil, and there is no strength or power except in Him.
- **Relevance of the *hadith* to the chapter:** That the Prophet ﷺ said regarding *al-tiyara*. “It does not prevent a Muslim from their objective’. Therefore, the one who is prevented from their objective is either a disbeliever (because of their major *shirk*), or a Muslim who has a deficiency in their *tawheed* (because of their minor *shirk*).

وَعَنْ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ مَرْفُوعًا: الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا، وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْهِبُهُ بِالتَّوَكُّلِ. رَوَاهُ أَبُو دَاوُدَ
وَالْتِّرْمِذِيُّ وَصَحَّحَهُ. وَجَعَلَ آخِرَهُ مِنْ قَوْلِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ.

Ibn Mas'ud narrated in a Marfu` hadith: al-Tiyarah is shirk, al-Tiyarah is shirk! There is none among us but who may fall into it but Allah removes it by means of sincere reliance on Him. [Abu Dawud and al-Tirmidhi who graded it as sahih and declared that the last part of the hadith is the statement of Ibn Mas'ud.]

- (الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ، الطَّيْرَةُ شِرْكٌ) – “*al-Tiyara* is *shirk*, *al-Tiyara* is *shirk*”. The Prophet ﷺ repeated the statement twice to emphasise its ruling. The type of *shirk* being referred to is either major or minor as per the classification which has preceded.
- (وَمَا مِنَّا إِلَّا) – “There is none among us but who may fall into it”. Anyone may be affected by *al-tiyara*.
- (وَلَكِنَّ اللَّهَ يُدْهِبُهُ بِالتَّوَكُّلِ) – “But Allah removes it by sincere reliance on Him”. That is, the firm belief that only Allah can bring about good and avert evil. This reliance on Allah is what removes the evil consequences of omens should they enter into the heart.

- (وَجَعَلَ آخِرَهُ مِنْ قَوْلِ ابْنِ مَسْعُودٍ) – “And he declared that the last part of the *hadith* is the statement of Ibn Mas’ud”. That is, al-Tirmidhi declared that the last part of the *hadith* is not from the words of the Prophet ﷺ, but rather the words of Ibn Mas’ud. This is the correct opinion, because belief in evil omens is an act of *shirk* (major or minor) and the Prophet ﷺ is protected from ever falling into *shirk*.
- **General meaning of the *hadith*:** In order to affirm the prohibition of believing in evil omens, the Prophet ﷺ declared it as an act of *shirk*, and repeated this declaration twice to emphasise its ruling. This is because belief in omens involves attachment of the heart to others besides Allah and mistrusting Him.
Ibn Mas’ud added that should anyone be affected by omens, they should renew their reliance on Allah, and with that, the effects of the omen will be removed from their heart.
- **Relevance of the *hadith* to the chapter:** That the Prophet ﷺ unequivocally declared *al-tiyara* to be *shirk*. He reiterated this twice to emphasise the ruling.

وَلَا حَمْدَ مِنْ حَدِيثِ ابْنِ عَمْرٍو: مَنْ رَدَّتْهُ الطَّيْرَةُ عَنْ حَاجَتِهِ فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ. قَالُوا: فَمَا كَفَّارَةُ ذَلِكَ؟ قَالَ: أَنْ تَقُولَ: اللَّهُمَّ لَا خَيْرَ إِلَّا خَيْرُكَ وَلَا طَيْرَ إِلَّا طَيْرُكَ وَلَا إِلَهَ غَيْرُكَ.

Ibn 'Amr narrated the following *hadith*: "Whoever is turned back by *al-Tiyarah* (bad omens) has committed *shirk*. They asked: What is the atonement for such a sin?' The Prophet ﷺ answered: To say: 'O Allah, there is no good except the good which You bestow. There is no evil except the evil which You decree. And there is no true Deity except You.' [Ahmad]

- **Takhreej:** This *hadith* was narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad. The authenticity of the *hadith* revolves around a single narrator (Ibn Lahee’a) whom the scholars of *hadith* differed regarding his status. Those who claimed that his *ahaadeeth* are sound (*hassan*), declared the *hadith* to be as such, while those who claimed that his *ahaadeeth* are weak (*da’eef*) declared the *hadith* to be as such. And Allah knows best.
- **Abdullah ibn Amr:** Ibnul ‘Aas. He was one of the early companions who narrated numerous *ahaadeeth*. May Allah be pleased with him.
- (فَقَدْ أَشْرَكَ) – “Has committed *shirk*”. Either major or minor *shirk*, as per the classification which has preceded.
- (مَا كَفَّارَةُ ذَلِكَ) – “What is the atonement for such a sin”. It would appear that the mentioned *du’aa* atones for both major and minor *shirk*. And Allah knows best.
- **General meaning of the *hadith*:** The Prophet ﷺ explains that any evil omen which discourages a person from accomplishing their objective is in fact an act of *shirk*. Therefore, if a person is hindered by an evil omen from undertaking a journey or accomplishing an objective, then they have fallen into *shirk* by renouncing true *tawakul* in Allah.
The *hadith* implies that those who do not subject themselves to omens are not influenced by them.
The Prophet ﷺ guides his *ummah* to the correct *du’aa* should the effects of an evil omen enter their hearts. The *du’aa* expresses sincere belief in Allah and true reliance on Him.
- **Relevance of the *hadith* to the chapter:** That the Prophet ﷺ clearly stated that belief in *al-tiyara* and subsequently acting upon this belief is *shirk*.

وَلَهُ مِنْ حَدِيثِ الْفَضْلِ بْنِ الْعَبَّاسِ: إِنَّمَا الطَّيْرَةُ مَا أَمْضَاكَ أَوْ رَدَّكَ.

al-Fadl Ibnul Abbas narrated the following *hadith*: *al-Tiyarah* is that which incites you to do something, or stops you from accomplishing it. [Ahmad]

- **Takhreej:** The *hadith* was narrated by Ahmad in his Musnad. It is a weak (*da'eef*) *hadith* because there is a disconnection in the chain of narration.
- **General meaning of the hadith:** Should the *hadith* be authentic, the Prophet ﷺ explains the effect belief in evil omens has. It either incites a person to do something, or stops them from accomplishing it. This is all based on their lack of trust in Allah, instead placing it on imagined events and causes which have no basis in the *sharee'ah*.
- **Relevance of the hadith to the chapter:** The *hadith* can be joined in meaning to the previous *hadith*. That is, if *al-tiyara* incites you to do something, or stops you from accomplishing it, then you have fallen into *shirk*.
- **Important issues of the Chapter**
 1. **The meanings of the verses: "Verily, these evil omens are with Allah but most of them know not" (al-A'raaf: 31) and "Your evil omens be with you" (Yasin: 19).** And that there is no contradiction between the two *ayaat*. The explanation of this has preceded.
 2. **Repudiation of contagion of disease.** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira and Anas. The *hadith* negates that contagion can occur without the permission of Allah. It is not negating the existence of contagion.
 3. **Negation of any bad omen (no tiyarah).** Also, as per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira and Anas. The *hadith* negates the effects of *al-tiyara*, not that it does not occur.
 4. **Repudiation of Hamah (Omen in the night owl).** As per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. Its explanation has preceded.
 5. **Negation of any bad omen in the month of Safar.** Also, as per the *hadith* of Abu Huraira. Its explanation has preceded.
 6. **al-Fa'l is not prohibited but in fact it is desirable.** As per the *hadith* of Anas, whereby the Prophet ﷺ said: "...but *al-Fa'l* pleases me". There is good in whatever pleases the Prophet ﷺ.
 7. **Explanation of al-Fa'l in detail.** As per the *hadith* of Anas. The Prophet ﷺ explained it as a positive word. Anything which gives encouragement to perform good is considered as *al-fa'l*, whether it is a positive word or a positive action.
 8. **There is no harm if such suspicion falls on the hearts while disliking it. Indeed, Allah will provide safety, due to deep trust in Him.** As per the *hadith* of Ibn Mas'ud. That is, if it occurs in the heart while disliking it, then there is no harm in this, and Allah will make it depart with true sincerity.
 9. **What should be said if such feelings occur.** As per the *hadith* of 'Urwa Ibn 'Aamir and Ibn 'Amr.
 10. **Declaration that al-Tiyarah is shirk.** As per the *hadith* of Ibn Mas'ud and Ibn 'Amr. If the belief is that omens can affect within themselves, then this constitutes major *shirk*. If, however, the belief is that omens are only a cause, then this constitutes minor *shirk*.
 11. **Explanation of blameworthy and condemned tiyarah.** As per the *hadith* of al-Fadl Ibnul Abbas (although it is weak). The condemned *tiyarah* is what incites you to do something or stops you from accomplishing it, based on imagined and deluded causes.